

## Chapter 15.100

### SIGN STANDARDS

#### Sections:

- 15.100.010 Purpose.
- 15.100.020 Applicability.
- 15.100.030 Definitions.
- 15.100.040 Prohibited signs.
- 15.100.050 Procedure to obtain sign permit or license.
- 15.100.060 Sign standards.
- 15.100.070 Sign area measurement.

#### **15.100.010 Purpose.**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive system of reasonable, effective, consistent, content-neutral, and nondiscriminatory standards for signs. These standards control the construction, size, type, location, electrification and maintenance of signs and sign structures within the city of Gunnison so as to:

- A. Protect Appearance. Protect the appearance of the community and enhance the attractiveness of the city of Gunnison as a place to live, do business and visit.
- B. Identification. Enable places of residence and commerce to be easily identified and allow the communication of information necessary for the conduct of business.
- C. Compatible. Permit signs that are compatible with their surroundings and aid in orientation, but preclude placement in a manner that conflicts with the principal uses of the site, adjacent land uses, or adjacent signs, or interferes with, obstructs the vision of, or distracts motorists, bicyclists or pedestrians.
- D. Limit Size and Number. Limit the size and number of signs and sign messages to the minimum reasonably necessary to identify a residential or business location and the nature of any such business.
- E. Lessen Hazards. Lessen hazardous situations, confusion and visual clutter caused by proliferation, improper placement or installation, illumination, animation and excessive height, area and bulk of signs which compete for the attention of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- F. Safety. Protect the public from the dangers of unsafe signs, and require signs to be constructed, installed, and maintained in a safe manner.
- G. Encourage Economic Development. Enhance the city's ability to support existing businesses and attract sources of economic development and growth. (Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-1).

#### **15.100.020 Applicability.**

This chapter shall apply to all signs located within the city of Gunnison. Signs shall only be allowed as permitted by this chapter. (Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-2).

#### **15.100.030 Definitions.**

“Sign” means any device, structure, fixture, display or placard which is permanently affixed to, painted on, placed on, incorporated in, or displayed from within a building surface or structure, or is freestanding upon a site which is intended to attract attention to a business, individual, commodity, service, activity or product by means of words, lettering, parts of letters, figures, numerals, phrases, sentences, emblems, trade names or other pictorial matter.

“Address sign” means a sign attached to a building denoting the street number assigned to the building.

“Awning sign” means a sign painted on, printed on or attached flat against the surface of an awning. For the purposes of determining maximum permitted sign area, only the graphic representation of the message shall be counted.

“Changeable copy sign” means a sign on which the message changes, either manually or automatically, on a lamp bank or through mechanical or electronic means.

“Directional/informational sign” means an on-premises sign which gives directions, instructions or facility information and which may contain the name or logo of an establishment, but may not contain advertising copy.

“Directory sign” means a sign which identifies the name and location of tenants in a multitenant commercial, industrial or institutional building or in a development composed of a group of buildings.

“Electrical sign” means a sign or sign structure in which electrical wiring, connections or fixtures are used.

“Flashing sign” means a sign which contains an intermittent or sequential flashing light source used primarily to attract attention, excluding changeable copy signs.

“Freestanding sign” means any sign supported by structures or supports that are placed on, or anchored in, the ground and that are independent from any building or other structure.

“Illegal sign” means a sign which was erected in violation of the sign standards in effect at the time the sign was erected.

“Illuminated sign” means a sign which is lighted from an internal source.

“Lighted sign” means a sign which is lighted from an external source.

“Moving or flashing signs” means signs which are designed to move, or have parts designed to move, or which have parts that appear to move, or flashing signs. Signs or sign parts which are inadvertently moved by wind and changeable copy signs, including time-and-temperature displays, are not prohibited.

“Nonconforming sign” means a sign which was lawfully established pursuant to the sign codes in effect at the time of its erection, but which does not conform to the standards of this land development code.

“Obscene sign” means a sign having those characteristics defined as obscene in the Colorado Revised Statutes, as amended.

“Obsolete sign” means a sign or sign structure which advertises an activity, product or business which no longer occupies the premises on which the sign is located. Obsolete signs shall be removed by the legal owner of record of the business within a period of 60 days after the business, product or service is no longer located upon the premises where the sign is located.

“Off-premises sign” means a sign advertising a business which is not physically located on the ownership parcel where the sign is located.

“Portable sign” means any freestanding, on-premises sign which is not designed to be permanently

affixed to the ground, but which is self-supporting.

“Projecting sign” means a sign which is affixed to or supported by a building or structure, which extends beyond the surface of that portion of the building or structure by more than four inches.

“Roof sign” means a sign erected, placed or maintained, in whole or in part, upon, against or directly above the roof, or which projects above the eaves of a pitched roof or above the walls of a flat roof. Signs which are manufactured into the material of awnings shall not be considered a roof sign.

“Sign area” means that area within the marginal lines of the sign surface which bears the advertisement or message; or in the case of messages, figures or symbols attached directly to or painted on the surface of a building, that area which is included in the smallest geometric figure which encloses the message, symbol, or figure displayed thereon.

“Sign structure” means a structure whose primary purpose is to support a sign.

“Snipe sign” means a temporary sign or poster affixed to a tree, fence, pole, or similar feature, or a sign added to a structure where it is not the primary, permitted sign.

“Temporary sign” means a nonpermanent sign or banner erected, affixed or maintained for a limited period of time, including real estate for sale or for rent signs, construction signs, political signs, signs advertising a special event which contain business logos, sale signs, and official governmental and legal public notices.

“Tourist-oriented directional sign (TODS)” means a traffic control device that contains one or more authorized business plaques which provide directional information for tourists to businesses.

“Vehicle sign” means a sign placed, painted on or otherwise affixed to a vehicle or trailer which are parked or located for the apparent purpose of advertising a product, service or activity or to direct people to a business or activity located on the premises or nearby. This definition is not intended to prohibit signs or lettering affixed to vehicles or trailers which are integral to the primary use of the vehicle or trailer.

“Wall sign” means a sign which is painted, placed or incorporated on, or affixed to and extending not more than six inches from, the wall of a building.

“Window sign” means a sign which is attached, mounted, painted or permanently displayed in a window and intended to be viewed from the outside. “Window signs” shall include permanent signs, emblems, or decals informing the public of goods or services available on the premises, credit card signs and signs indicating hours of business. (Ord. 3-2002 §§ 4, 5; Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-3).

#### **15.100.040 Prohibited signs.**

The following signs, as defined in GMC 15.100.030, are prohibited from erection, construction, repair, alteration, relocation, or placement within the city:

- A. Signs Near Electric Conductors. Signs located closer than 10 feet horizontally or 12 feet vertically from overhead electrical conductors, excepting conductors enclosed in rigid conduit, if the voltage of the line exceeds 750 volts, or as otherwise specified in the National Electrical Code or local electric ordinances then in effect.
- B. Signs Obstructing Egress. Signs installed so as to interfere with use of fire escapes, standpipes or hinder adequate light or ventilation of required openings in walls.
- C. Obscene signs.

D. Roof signs.

E. Hazardous Signs. Signs which constitute a hazard because they:

1. Obstruct Visibility. Obstruct or interfere with traffic signs or signals or with the visibility of operators of vehicles, bicycles, or other conveyances using the public right-of-way;
2. Damage or Disrepair. Threaten harm to persons or property due to damage, disrepair, unsafe installation, or for any other reason;
3. Imitate Official Signs. Imitate or resemble official traffic or government signs or signals; or
4. Illegible. Are not legible.

F. Obsolete signs.

G. Off-premises signs (except as noted in GMC 15.100.050(B)(10)).

H. Moving or flashing signs (except as noted in the definition of “moving or flashing signs” in GMC 15.100.030).

I. Snipe signs.

J. Vehicle signs. (Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-4).

**15.100.050 Procedure to obtain sign permit or license.**

A. Permit Required. A sign permit shall be obtained from the zoning administrator prior to the erection, placement, construction, reconstruction or relocation of any sign in the city of Gunnison, except for the signs listed in subsection (B) of this section, Exempt Signs. The exemption shall not be construed to relieve the owner from complying with all other applicable provisions of this chapter.

B. Exempt Signs. The following devices are exempt from the requirements that a sign permit be obtained because they do not create safety hazards or aesthetic disruptions or they promote public safety or the dissemination of public information or they are accessory to the exercise of an individual's First Amendment rights. Exempt signs must be maintained per subsection (H) of this section.

1. Nameplate Signs. Nameplate signs identifying ownership of personal residences.
2. Address Signs. Address signs, as required by the Gunnison Municipal Code, including mailboxes.
3. Directional and Safety Signs. Directional/information signs, signs describing the name or location of a public school, governmental entity or restroom, or signs warning of danger or erected as aids to safety.
4. Memorial Signs. Memorial plaques, tablets, or statuary declaring names of buildings and dates of erection when cut into any masonry surface or when constructed of bronze or other incombustible material, or other remembrances of persons or events that are noncommercial in nature.
5. Interior Signs. Signs situated within a building which are not readily visible from outside of such building.
6. Flags. Flags, emblems, and insignia of governmental or nonprofit organizations, and decorative or promotional flags containing no advertising message.

7. Dispensing Device Signs. Signs which are an integral part of the design of a pump, vending machine, or other dispensing device.
8. Special Event Signs. Decorations, banners, or displays which announce or describe public holidays, special community events or seasonal promotions of interest to the entire community and bearing no commercial statements.
9. Signs indicating a historical landmark designation of a structure by the city, county, state, or federal governments, not to exceed six square feet.
10. Signs for placement upon publicly owned athletic fields' fences, scoreboard, and ice rink boards which meet the following criteria:
  - a. Such signs shall be securely fastened, constructed and continuously maintained in such a manner as to prevent damage from the natural elements.
  - b. Such signs shall be located only upon fences or boards which encircle playing fields or rinks, facing infield, and in such a manner so as to minimize visual impacts to areas located outside of the park facilities.
  - c. Such signs shall be permitted for the sole purpose of generating funds for city-sponsored parks and recreation programs and facilities. In all cases, the overall aesthetics of the park and the surrounding area shall be significant considerations in the placement and design of the signs.
  - d. An agreement between the city parks and recreation department and the sign sponsor shall be executed specifying annual or one-time fees and a maintenance schedule. This agreement may be reviewed annually.
11. Temporary signs complying with the standards listed in GMC 15.100.060(D).

C. Application for Sign Permit. The application for a sign permit shall include the following information:

1. Sign Type. Identification of the type of sign proposed.
  2. Sketch. A sketch showing the proposed dimensions, materials and design of the sign, and any proposed structural supports or electrical components.
  3. Location. A site plan which identifies the proposed location of the sign, and the location of all other existing signs on the building or parcel.
  4. Dimensions. The dimensions of building frontages; the dimensions of any other sign located on the property; and any other information needed to calculate permitted sign area, height or location on the property.
  5. Consent. A letter of consent from the owner of the building or property, if the applicant is not the owner.
  6. Form. Any other information required on the form provided by the zoning administrator.
  7. A nonrefundable permit fee. There is no permit fee for an exempt sign.
- D. Determination of Sufficiency. After receiving the permit application, the zoning administrator shall determine whether it is complete. If the application is not complete, the zoning administrator shall

notify the applicant and shall take no further action until the deficiencies are remedied.

- E. Issuance of Permit. If the application is complete, the zoning administrator shall determine whether the application complies with the standards of this chapter and the International Building Code, as applicable. The zoning administrator shall be authorized to issue the permit, issue the permit with conditions or deny the permit application.
1. Inspections Generally. All signs shall be subject to inspection to determine that the sign is being installed and/or maintained in accordance with the terms of this land development code and International Building Code, as applicable.
  2. Footing Inspections. Footing inspections may be required by the building official for all signs having footings.
  3. Electrical Inspections. All signs containing electrical wiring shall be subject to the provisions of the National Electrical Code.
- F. Expiration. Whenever the construction of any sign has not been completed within 180 days after its approval, the permit shall expire.
- G. License Agreement. Signs shall not be placed upon a public right-of-way and shall not project over a public right-of-way by more than four inches without first obtaining a sign permit from the zoning administrator and also obtaining a license agreement from the city council. Any sign which projects over a right-of-way in such a manner that it may cause a danger to the public shall have supports, hangers or fasteners certified by a Colorado-licensed structural engineer.
- H. Maintenance. All signs, including signs exempt from these regulations with respect to permits and fees, shall be maintained in good structural condition; shall be in compliance with all building and electrical codes; and shall be in conformance with these sign standards at all times. (Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-5).

**15.100.060 Sign standards.**

- A. Freestanding Signs Located Within the Commercial, Industrial and Central Business District Zones.
1. Maximum Height Related to Setback. The maximum height of a freestanding sign shall be based on the distance the sign is set back from the face of the curb or the edge of the pavement, where no curb exists. The relationship between height and setback shall be as follows:

Sign Setback	Maximum Height
Up to 20 feet	15 feet
More than 20 feet	15 feet, plus 0.5 feet for each additional 1 foot of setback, to a maximum height of 25 feet

2. Maximum Height Related to Building Height. The maximum height of a freestanding sign shall not exceed the maximum height of the tallest building on the premises, regardless of how far the sign is set back on the lot.
3. Maximum Area. The maximum area of the combined faces of a freestanding sign shall be as follows:
  - a. For all single-faced signs, 50 square feet.

- b. For all two-faced signs, 50 square feet. Only one side of the two-faced sign shall count towards the aggregate size, provided both sides are identical.
    - c. For all multifaced signs, 50 square feet. The size of the sign shall be computed by measuring the sign area which may be seen by one person from one viewpoint.
  4. Illumination. Sources of light for illuminated signs shall be shielded to prevent glare to motorists and located and adjusted so that the illuminating device does not cast light directly on adjacent residential properties or rights-of-way, except for alleys.
  5. Visibility. When signs are located on a corner lot, their placement shall be such that they do not impair visibility of intersecting traffic or pedestrians.
- B. Signs Located in Residential Zones. Signs located in any residential zone district (R-1, R-1M, R-2, R2M, R-3) shall not exceed six sq. ft. in aggregate sign area and be more than six feet in height. One sign per use shall be permitted to advertise a home occupation, home business, daycare home, daycare school, or daycare center, which shall not exceed two sq. ft. in area and shall be mounted on the residence as a wall sign.
- C. Signs in the Professional Business (B-1) Zone.
1. Size. Signs located in the Professional Business (B-1) zone district shall not exceed 12 square feet in aggregate.
  2. Height of Freestanding Signs. Freestanding signs shall not exceed six feet in height.
  3. Number of Freestanding Signs. No more than one freestanding sign shall be permitted per street frontage on a parcel in this zone.
  4. Visibility. When freestanding signs are located on a corner lot, their placement shall be such that they do not cause obstructions or blind corners at intersections.

Zoning District	Sign Type	Number	Max. Sign Area	Height
Residential Zones (R1, R-1M, R-2, R2M, R-3)	Home Business, Home Occupation, Daycare Home, School, Center	1 per use	2 square feet, not to exceed 6 square feet in aggregate	Wall sign, 6 feet or less
Business Zone (B-1)	All	Per PSA, GMC 15.100.07 0	12 square feet	6 feet

D. Temporary Signs.

1. City Right-of-Way. A temporary sign and sign structure shall not be located within or extend above a city right-of-way, unless a license agreement is approved by the city council.
2. Removal. Temporary signs shall be removed within three days following the conclusion of the event, political campaign, activity, sale, hunting season, or hearing which they are advertising or after the real estate is sold or rented or the construction is completed.

3. Area. The total area of temporary signs on any property shall not exceed 50 square feet in area, except as noted in subsections (D)(4) through (D)(7) of this section.
4. Sale Signs. A sale sign shall be permitted no more than six times per year for two-week intervals each. A sale sign shall not exceed 24 square feet in area.
5. Real Estate for Sale or for Rent Signs. No more than one real estate for sale or for rent sign shall be permitted on any ownership parcel. No more than one sale sign shall be posted per street frontage. A for sale or for rent sign shall not exceed six square feet in area in any residential zone district and shall not exceed 32 square feet in all other zone districts.
6. Construction Signs. Signs identifying the firms designing, financing or constructing a project shall be limited to one sign per street frontage, not to exceed a total of two signs per site and a maximum size of 32 square feet per sign.
7. Signs During Hunting Seasons. Banners and/or window signs associated with deer, elk, or combined hunting seasons shall only be displayed during such seasons.

E. Projecting Signs, as Defined in GMC 15.100.030.

1. Maximum Area. A projecting sign shall not exceed 12 square feet in area.
2. Height. The bottom of a hanging or projecting sign shall be placed a minimum of eight feet above the ground, but shall not extend above the eave line or parapet wall of the building to which it is affixed.
3. Maximum Extension. A projecting sign shall not extend more than five feet from the building wall to which it is affixed.
4. Prohibited in Alleys. Projecting signs shall be prohibited in public alleys. Signs on buildings along alleys shall be mounted flush against the wall.

F. Directory signs, as defined in GMC 15.100.030, shall be permitted. The area of the directory sign may be in addition to the maximum permitted sign area for any street frontage.

1. Individual Commercial, Industrial or Institutional Buildings. A directory sign for an individual commercial, industrial or institutional building shall be a wall sign or freestanding sign. The maximum permitted area of such signs shall be as follows:
  - a. For one to five businesses, one sq. ft. of sign area per business.
  - b. For six to 10 businesses, five sq. ft., plus one-half sq. ft. of sign area for each business over five businesses.
  - c. For more than 10 businesses, seven and one-half sq. ft., plus one-quarter sq. ft. of sign area for each business over 10 businesses, to a maximum of 10 sq. ft.
2. Development Composed of a Group of Buildings. A directory sign for a development composed of a group of buildings may be a freestanding or wall sign located at the entry to the group of buildings. One such directory sign shall be permitted per entrance from a public road. The maximum total area allowed shall be 50 sq. ft. for the aggregate square footage of all such directory signs.

G. Tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS), as defined in GMC 15.100.030, shall be permitted.



1. Standards. Tourist-oriented directional signs (TODS) located within the city of Gunnison shall follow the Colorado Department of Transportation's "Rules and Regulations for Tourist Oriented Directional Signs," effective November 30, 1998. They shall also be required to meet any standards as set by resolution of the city council. (Ord. 3-2002 §§ 6, 7, 8; Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-6).

**15.100.070 Sign area measurement.**

- A. Formula. The maximum permitted sign area (PSA) for any street frontage shall be calculated by using the formula below; provided, that the maximum permitted sign area shall not exceed a total of 150 square feet per ownership parcel per frontage.

Formula:  $(LF \times 2) + (20 \text{ square feet}) = \text{PSA}$ .

Where: LF = Linear feet of street frontage of the property; and

PSA = Permitted sign area in square feet.

- B. Determination of Street Frontage. To determine to which frontage the sign area applies, the following shall apply:
  1. Location. Signs placed within the area adjacent to the front half of the main business structure shall have the area of the signs applied to the primary street frontage. Signs placed within the area adjacent to the back half of the main business structure shall have the area of the signs applied to the nearest street frontage from which the sign is visible. If the main business structure has only one street frontage, the area of those signs shall be applied to that street frontage.
  2. Parcels Without Structures. For the purpose of this section, parcels used for business which do not contain a permanent business structure shall be granted up to 32 square feet of signage per street frontage, up to two frontages.
- C. Multiface Signs. The sign area for a sign with more than one face shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces visible from a single point, unless otherwise specified in this section. When two identical sign faces are placed back to back, and are at no point more than two feet from each other, the area of the sign shall be counted as the area of a single face if both faces are of equal area, or the area of the larger face if the faces are not of equal area. (Ord. 16-1999 § 1; Ord. 1-1997 § 1; Code 1997 § 15-10-7).